

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

In the Office Action, claims 3, 5-7, 9, 21, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1, 4-8, 10-14, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication No. 60-262735 (hereinafter "*JP*- '735").

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 10-14, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0074718 to *Schlageter*.

Claims 9 and 21-22 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office Action and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants amend claims 1, 5, 9, 19, 21, and 22, and cancel claims 2 and 3 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants add claims 23 and 24. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-14, 19, and 21-24 are pending for further consideration.

All Subject Matter Complies with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 3, 5-7, 9, 21, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Claims 5, 9, 21, and 22 have been amended to address the alleged ambiguities pointed out by the Examiner in the December 6, 2006 Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of claims 5-7, 9, 21, and 22 in light of the current

amendments to claims 5, 9, 21, and 22. With regard to claim 3, Applicants respectfully cancel claim 3 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that all rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 4-8, 10-14, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication No. 60-262735 (hereinafter “JP- ‘735”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action has not established that JP- ‘735 anticipates each and every feature of Applicants’ claimed invention and that all rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn. Namely, Applicants contend that newly amended independent claims 1 and 19 recite the feature of “the side position regulating mechanism includes a side guide disposed on a side of the sheet transportation path and correspondingly with the side edge position of the sheet and at least one skew member which skew-transport the sheet toward the side guide, and at least two position sensors which are disposed correspondingly with the side edge position of the sheet, and a shift transportation roll which nip-transport the sheet and which is movable perpendicularly to a transportation direction of the sheet.” At least these features are not disclosed or taught by JP- ‘735.

JP- ‘735 discloses a turntable that rotates and a base plate that translates sheet paper for an imaging apparatus. See Fig. 1 of JP- ‘735. However, JP- ‘735 fails to teach or suggest at least the above features of claims 1 and 19.

JP- '735 does not disclose a “side position regulating mechanism [3 that] includes a side guide disposed on a side of the sheet transportation path and correspondingly with the side edge position of the sheet and a skew member which skew-transport the sheet toward the side guide.” If you consider that item L2 of Fig. 1 in *JP- '735* is a side guide, then there is no structure in *JP- '735* that acts as a skew member to skew-transport a sheet toward the side guide. Also *JP- '735* does not disclose either “at least two position sensors . . . disposed correspondingly with the side edge position of the sheet,” or “a shift transportation roll which nip-transport the sheet and which is movable perpendicularly to a transportation direction of the sheet,” as newly recited in claims 1 and 19. Therefore, because *JP- '735* does not disclose all the features of newly amended independent claims 1 and 19, it cannot anticipate the present invention.

As pointed out in MPEP § 2131, a claim is anticipated by a prior art reference only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found. *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 2 USPQ2d 1051 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn because *JP- '735* does not teach or suggest each feature of newly amended independent claims 1 and 19.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 4-8 and 10-14 are also allowable insofar as they recite the patentable combinations of features recited in claim 1, as well as reciting additional features that further distinguish over the applied prior art.

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 10-14, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0074718 to *Schlageter*. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action has not established that *JP- '735* anticipates each and every feature of Applicants' claimed invention and that all rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn. Namely, Applicants contend that newly amended independent claims 1 and 19 recite the features of cancelled claims 2 and 3 which recite "the side position regulating mechanism includes a side guide disposed on a side of the sheet transportation path and correspondingly with the side edge position of the sheet and at least one skew member which skew-transport the sheet toward the side guide, and at least two position sensors which are disposed correspondingly with the side edge position of the sheet, and a shift transportation roll which nip-transport the sheet and which is movable perpendicularly to a transportation direction of the sheet." At least these features are not disclosed or taught by *Schlageter*.

Schlageter discloses a system to decrease the lateral offset of sheets before they reach an active registration system. See Fig. 1 of *Schlageter*. However, *Schlageter* fails to teach or suggest at least the above features of claims 1 and 19.

The Office Action states that "Figs. 1-5 [of *Schlageter*] show that the side position regulating mechanism (including 14, 16, 26, 28, and 74) includes a side guide (16) disposed on a side of the sheet transportation path (near F)." However, *Schlageter* actually discloses drive rollers 14 and 16, nip rollers 26 and 28, and a pivoting transport 74. Contrary to the Office Action, "the roll pairs 14, 26 and 16, 28 engage the sheet S and drive it through the registration unit 10." See page 2 ¶ [0021] of *Schlageter*. That is, *Schlageter* does not disclose that the drive

roller 16 is a side guide that receives sheets skewed toward it. Rather the drive roller 16 engages the sheets and drives them through the registration unit.

The drive rollers 14 and 16 receive information from sensor 54 that detects the arrival of sheets at their lead edges and changes the rollers' rotation speed to correct skews in position of the sheets. See page 3 ¶ [0026] of *Schlageter*. However, the drive rollers (14, 16) do not regulate the side position of the sheets. The assertion in the Office Action is erroneous because the drive rollers 14, 16 do not act as a side guide at all. See page 2 ¶ [0021-22] of *Schlageter*. Therefore, because *Schlageter* does not disclose all the features of newly amended independent claims 1 and 19, it cannot anticipate the present invention.

As pointed out in MPEP § 2131, a claim is anticipated by a prior art reference only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found. *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 2 USPQ2d 1051 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn because *JP- '735* does not teach or suggest each feature of newly amended independent claims 1 and 19.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 4-7 and 10-14 are also allowable insofar as they recite the patentable combinations of features recited in claim 1, as well as reciting additional features that further distinguish over the applied prior art.

New Claims

Applicants respectfully request allowance of independent claims 23 and 24 which are similar in scope to claims 1 and 19 above. The claims are allowable insofar as they recite the patentable combinations of features recited in claims 1 and 19. Support can be found at least on page 10 of the specification.

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments, claims 23 and 24 are allowable and pending for further consideration.

CONCLUSION

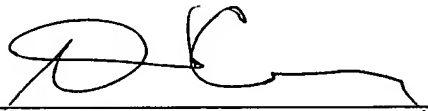
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of the response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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